



S E R M O N I.

EXODUS XX. 24.

— *In all places, where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bleſs thee.*

THIS chapter begins with an account of the giving of the law of the decalogue, or ten commands, on mount *Sinai*, to the children of *Israel*. A very compendious system of morality this, and was peculiarly calculated for that people; as the preface to it shows, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other God, &c.* and was admirably adapted to their tempers, dispositions, and circumstances; and exceedingly well suited to correct their minds and manners; and to guide and direct 'em in matters of religion, and in their duty to God and man; not but that all of it, that is of a moral nature, is binding upon the Gentiles, and especially ought to be regarded by us Christians, who profess

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ourselves to be the followers of Jesus; since most of the precepts of it have been recited and urged by him^a, and the whole by him reduced to these two heads, love to God, and love to our neighbour; saying, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment: and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*^b. And the apostle Paul, a disciple of his, and one that had the mind of Christ, having mentioned the several laws of the second table, observes; *that if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* — Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law^c: and elsewhere^d he says, *all the law is fulfilled in one word; even this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And the rather this law should be attended to by us, since our blessed Redeemer and Saviour came not to destroy it, but to fulfil it^e, by his subjection to it, both to the precept and penalty of it; whereby, tho' he has delivered us from the curse and condemnation of it, yet has not exempted us from obedience to it; so that we are not without law to God, tho' freed from

^a Matt. xix. 17, 18, 19.^b Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.^c Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.^d Gal. v. 14.^e Matt. v. 17.

from obligation to punishment for the transgression of it, thro' the satisfaction of our surety; but are under the *law to Christ*^f, as he is head, king, and law-giver in his church. And it is with pleasure we can behold the law fulfilled for us by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and held forth in his hand, as king of saints, as a rule of walk and conversation unto us: in which view of it, every believer may say of it, as the apostle did, *I delight in the law of God, after the inward man*^g. The delivery of this law, indeed, was attended with very terrifying circumstances; such as a dark, thick, tempestuous cloud, fire, and smoke; thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes; which not only made the children of *Israel* to tremble, and to stand at a distance; but *Moses* himself said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*^h. These were emblems of the dreadful things, uttered by the law, against the transgressors of it; and of the terrible consequences of their transgressions; and of the terrors raised by it in the consciences of awakened sinners; wherefore the apostle says, *tell me, ye that desire to be under the law; that is, as a covenant of works, do ye not bear the law?* the voice and language of it, its menaces and curses, what it saith to them who are under it, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may

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^f 1 Cor. ix. 21.^g Rom. vii. 22.^h Heb. xii. 21.ⁱ Gal. iv. 21.

become guilty before God^k. It accuses of breaches and violations of it; it effectually supports its charges; it convicts of guilt, and confounds the sinner; and says enough, to the silencing of all objections; so that nothing can be said, why judgment should not proceed, and the sentence be pronounced and executed: to them who *are of the works of the law*; who seek for justification, salvation, and eternal life, by obedience to it; it says, *curst is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them*^l. In short, it is a cutting and killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death. Hence a Mediator was found necessary, and desired by the people of *Israel*, at this time the law was given; *they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die, y. 19.* This office *Moses* undertook, at their request, and *drew near unto the thick darkness*, where God was, *y. 21.* and became a Mediator between God and them; and has the name of one given him. Hence the law is said to be *ordained by angels, in the hand of a Mediator*^m; that is, *Moses*, who was a type of Christ, the Mediator between God and man; by whom we have access to him, with boldness and confidence, thro' his being the fulfilling end of the law for righteousnessⁿ, by obeying

^k Rom. iii. 19.^l Gal. iii. 10.^m Gal. iii. 19.ⁿ Rom. x. 4.

obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of it.

Now, tho' this law, as to the manner of its delivery, was so terrible; yet, as to the matter of it, it was holy, just, and good; a transcript of the divine nature, and a revelation of the will of God; and was an high favour; and a peculiar privilege to be indulged with it: hence, says *Moses* °, *what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law that I set before you this day?* And the psalmist *David* also takes notice of this, as an instance of the distinguishing goodness of God to the people of *Israel*; *he sheweth his word unto Jacob; his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them; praise ye the Lord* †. And the apostle *Paul* reckons, among the many special privileges of the *Jewish* nation, that to them pertained the covenant, the giving of the law, and the service of God ‡. Wherefore, since *Jehovah* condescended to speak with them from heaven, and favoured them with a divine revelation; they were laid under obligation to serve and worship him, in the manner he should direct them, as well as in places where they should do it. *You have seen*, says he, *ψ. 22, 23. that I have talked with you from heaven: ye shall not make with me gods of silver;*

° Deut. iv. 8.

† Ps. cxlviii. 19, 20.

‡ Rom. ix. 4.

*silver ; neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold, y. 22, 23. and then directs them to make an altar, to offer on it sacrifice unto him, y. 24. an altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen ; which altar was a type of Christ, who is that altar we Christians, or believers in Christ, have ; have a right unto, to use it, and partake of it ; whereof they have no right to eat, that serve the tabernacle^r, or keep up the Jewish forms of worship now abolished : that altar, that sanctifies every spiritual gift, presented on it by faith, and which renders every spiritual sacrifice of prayer or praise acceptable to God^s. Also the sacrifices offered up on the altar of earth, were typical of better ; even of the sacrifice of Christ, which is of a sweet-smelling savour to God ; thereby sin being made an end of, and reconciliation and atonement made for it. Now, the Lord, to encourage the people of *Israel* to worship him in his own way, and where he would have them, promises his presence with them, and his blessing on them, in the words I have read to you ; *in all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* As yet no particular places were appointed for worship ; and, therefore, he says, *where I record, or am about to record, or shall record.* The tabernacle was not
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^r Heb. xiii. 10.^s Matt. xxiii. 19. If. lvi. 7.

now erected, nor orders given for it, which afterwards were, *let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them* *. Nor as yet was the ark of the testimony made, over which was the mercy-seat; on which were the cherubim; between which Jehovah took up his residence; nor were any place, or places, pointed at as yet, where the tabernacle, or the things in it, when made, should be set up: and, tho' after this, the Lord did signify there was a place he should chuse to put his name in, and cause it to dwell there; and where, and where only, they should come and offer their sacrifices, and keep their pas-fover, and other feasts; yet he did not presently express this by name; eventually, and in the issue, it appear'd to be the city of *Jerusalem*; tho' before that, the tabernacle and the ark in it, were at other places, as *Gilgal*, *Shiloh*, &c. but this was a fixed and stable place for it; here *Solomon*, by divine direction, built a magnificent temple, where the worship of God was continued some hundreds of years: -this was destroyed by the *Chaldeans*, which occasioned an intermission of service for some time; and then it was rebuilt by *Zerobabel*, which continued till the coming of Christ, and was a little time after demolished by the *Romans*; and ever since, the worship of God is not limited and restrained to any certain place; neither at

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* *Exod. xxv. 8.*

Jerusalem, nor any other particular place, are men obliged to *worship the Father*; but they may worship him any where, so be it they *worship him in spirit and in truth* *. Under the gospel-dispensation, men may *lift up holy hands every where, without wrath and doubting* †; they may pray and preach, and administer the ordinances of Christ, wherever they can find a place proper and convenient: the only description of places, and the only direction to us, where we should meet and worship, is, where God *records his name*: and, in this light and view of things, I shall consider the above words, by observing,

I. What those places are which God has a regard unto; and where his people have encouragement to serve and worship him; and these are, where he *records his name*.

II. The regard he has to such places, and the encouragement he gives to persons that worship him: he promises his presence and his blessing; *I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee*.

I. The place, or places where the people of God are directed to worship him, and he shews a regard unto, are where his *name* is *recorded*. Under this head I shall shew, what is meant by the *name* of the Lord; what by

* Gal. iv. 21, 23, 24.

† 1 Tim. ii. 8.

recording his name ; and point at the places where this may be done.

First, what may be intended by the *name* of the Lord ; which admits of various significations. 1. by it is sometimes meant the Lord himself ; as, when it is said, *the name of the God of Jacob defend thee*^z ; that is, God himself, who is *Jacob's God* ; for who else is the defence of his people ? he is a wall of fire round about them ; he is their place of defence ; which is the munition of rocks ; and being so, they may sing unto God their strength, and say unto him, as *David* did, *God is my defence, and the God of my mercy*^y. Again, when it is said, *the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth unto it, and is safe*^z. The meaning is, the Lord himself is a strong tower ; and such the psalmist often calls him, saying, *he is my salvation and my high tower, a shelter for me, and the strong tower from the enemy*^a : hither do the saints betake themselves, in times of distress and danger ; and here they remain safe until the *calamities be overpast*. So the name of Christ signifies Christ himself ; *in his name shall the Gentiles trust*^b ; that is, in himself ; in his person for acceptance ; in his righteousness for justification ; in his blood for pardon ; and in his fulness for all supply. Nor is any other the

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proper

^z Pf. xx. 1.

^y Pf. lix. 17.

^z Prov. xviii. 10.

^a Pf. xviii. 1. and lxi. 3.

^b Matt. xii. 17.

proper object of trust and confidence; not any creature or creature-act: *blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is* ^c.

2. The name of the Lord sometimes intends his perfections; as, when it is said of Christ, the angel of God's presence; the angel that went before the *Israelites*, and guided and guarded them thro' the wilderness, to the land of *Canaan*, *beware of him, and obey his voice*; — *for my name is in him* ^d; the nature and perfections of God; the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in him; every perfection of Deity; all that the Father hath he has; he is the express image of his person; and so like him, having the whole divine nature in him, that he who sees the one sees the other. And, as these are in him, as God, as a divine person; so they are display'd in him as Mediator; in whom God has *proclaimed his name*; that is, his perfections of mercy, grace, goodness, justice, and holiness particularly; since it follows, *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty* ^e; for these divine perfections are more especially glorified, in our redemption and salvation by Christ; where
mercy

^c Jer. xvii. 7.
and xxxiv. 5, 6, 7.

^d Exod. xxiii. 21.

^e Exod. xxxiii. 19.

mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other^f. Once more, where it is said, *O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth*^g! the sense is; what a glorious display of thy perfections is made in the earth, through the preaching of the gospel! whereby, in the first times of it, to which this passage belongs, was given *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face, or person, of Jesus Christ*^h; that is, of the glorious perfections of God, as they are set forth in the person of Christ, and in the work of redemption: and so in the latter day, by the same means, will *the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*ⁱ.

3. By the name of the Lord may be meant, any, or every name of the Lord, by which he is revealed, manifested, and made known to the sons of men. The first name of his we meet with, is that of *Elohim*; *in the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth*^k; which name has the signification of worship and adoration in it; being derived from a root^l, which signifies to worship;

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God

^f Ps. lxxxv. 10.^g Ps. viii. 1.^h 2 Cor. iv. 6.ⁱ Hab. ii. 14.^k Gen. i. 1.

^l אלה Coluit, adoravit, idem quod עבד, unde אלהי Deus, quasi numen venerandum, Hottinger. Smegma oriental. l. i. c. vii. p. 123. אלהי Coluit, veneratus est, adoravit, apud Arabes; inde est אלהי Deus, sic dictus, quod veneratione, cultu, & adoratione prosequendus sit.— generatim &

God being the sole object of religious worship; and to which the apostle may be thought to have some respect, when he explains Deity, by that which is worshipped; for, speaking of Antichrist, he says, *who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped*^m. And the word *Elohim* being of the plural number, may with propriety enough be rendered, *the adorable ones*; and very well be thought to denote a plurality; which, according to divine revelation, is a trinity of persons, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; which three are one; and who manifestly appear in the creation of all things: the Father, who created all things by Jesus Christ; and the Word, who spake, and it was done; who commanded, and it stood fast; who said, let such and such a thing be, and it was: and the Spirit of God, who garnished the heavens, and moved upon the face of the waters; and brought the confused and indigested chaos into the beautiful order the earth since was; so true is that of the psalmist, *by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all*

vi originis notat *εὐλασμός*, h. e. numen venerabile seu adorandum. *Stockii Clavis Ling. S.* p. 61. Jure meritissimo contenditur, Hebræos olim possedisse geminam radicem, alteram *יהוה* *Juravit*, pro *יהוה* vel *יהוה* ult. *vaw aut je*; alteram *יהוה* He mobili & radicali, *Coluit*, unde *יהוה* numen colendum. *Schultens. Comment. in Job i. 1. Tom. I. p. 4.* Sic alii, ut *De Dieu Animadv. in Exod. vii. 1. Paschii Dissert. de Selah in Thesaur. Philol. Theolog. Vpl. I. p. 671.*

^m 2 Theff. ii. 4.

all the host of them by the breath, or spirit, of his mouth^a. The next name by which God made himself known, is that of *God Almighty*; of which he himself says, *I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty*^o; referring, no doubt, in the first place, and particularly to his appearance to *Abraham*, when ninety years of age; to whom he said, *I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect*^p; a name that well agrees with him; as is clear by his making all things out of nothing; by upholding, and maintaining in being the things he has made; by the redemption and preservation of his people; and by fulfilling his purposes, prophecies, and promises^q: and there is no name or title by which he makes himself known, that is more suited to encourage the faith and hope of his children, in times of difficulty and danger; since his

band

^a Ps. xxxiii. 6. ^o Exod. vi. 3. ^p Gen. xvii. 1.

^q Tho' some render it *all-sufficient*, deriving the word מְּ from מְּ *who*, and מְּ *sufficient*; so *Drusius*. God being sufficient, in, and of, and for himself, and stands in no need of any thing from his creatures; and having all-sufficiency in him, for the supply of their wants, both temporal and spiritual. Tho' others derive it from מְּ a pap, or breast; he having blessings of the breast, or breasts of consolation for his people; see Gen. xlix. 25. Is. lxvi. 11. So *Isis*, *Ceres*, and *Diana*, are represented by the Heathens, as full of breasts, and called from thence *Mammæsa*. Thus *Paschius* in *Dissertat. ut supra*, gives the derivation of it; מְּ (quod a rad. מְּ mamma, uber, pinguedo,) dicit deum nutricium & cibatorem omnium; not to take notice of other etymologies of the word; of which see *Suxtorfii Dissert. de Nominibus Dei Hebr.* S. 48.

*band is not shortened, that it cannot save*². Another name following this, by which the Divine Being has thought fit to manifest himself is that of *Jehovab*; which it was not his pleasure to make himself known by, to the above patriarchs; for, he says, *but by my name Jehovab was I not known to them*³. This is expressive of his existence; of him as the being of beings; of his immutability and eternity⁴; and is referred to, when *Moses*, having asked of God, what he should say to the children of *Israel*, should they enquire of him who sent him to them, saying, *what is his name?* he is bid to say, *I am that I am, hath sent me to you*⁵; or, *I am that I was*; and *I am that I shall be*; or, as *John* well deciphers it, *which is, and which was, and which is to come*⁶; taking in all time, and tenses past, present, and future⁷. And this being a name peculiar to the most high God, and yet given to Christ, *Jehovah* our righteousness, is no inconsiderable proof of his proper

² *Is.* lix. 1.

³ *Exod.* vi. 3.

⁴ Derivatur enim a radice *יהוה* vel *יהו* (nam utraque in lingua Hebræa est usitata) *esse, existere*—unde *יהוה* est ens existens à seipso ab æterno, & in æternum, omnibusque aliis extra se essentiam & existentiam communicans, *Buxtorf.* ut supra, S. 7. *יהוה* (quod a radice Ebr. *יהו* aut Chald. *יהו* existit, fuit, &c. derivatum) significat ens a, in, & per se essentialissimum. *Pascbuis* ut supra.

⁵ *Exod.* iii. 13, 14.

⁶ *Rev.* i. 4.

⁷ Qui ab initio se demonstravit, & nunc demonstrat, & imposterum se demonstrabit fidelem creatorem, donec fiat & sit in omnibus omnia, *Cocceii Lexicon*, Col. 177.

proper and supreme Deity. Another name of God is, *the Lord of hosts*; and by which he is frequently called; *the portion of Jacob is not like unto them*, the idols of the Gentiles; *the Lord of hosts is his name*¹; the Lord of *Sabaoth*²; and *James* retains the *Hebrew* word untranslated³, and our version of him; which is not to be pronounced and understood, as it often wrongly is, of *the Lord of Sabbath*; but of the Lord of hosts, or armies, both above and below; and not only of the sun, moon, and stars, sometimes called the host of heaven; but of the angels; the heavenly militia; that multitude of the heavenly host; part of which attended at our Lord's incarnation; these are at his beck, will, and command, as well as all the hosts and armies of men on earth; for, *he doth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, *what dost thou*⁴? The name of *the Lord God of Israel*, is frequently given him in the prophetic writings, especially of *Jeremiah*, who often

¹ Jer. x. 16.² Jam. v. 4.

³ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת dominus exercituum, recte autem vocatur Deus, non Deus exercitus in singulari numero, sed Deus exercituum, quia varios habet exercitus, qui ipsi parent, ministrant & militant. — visibiles & invisibiles, quibus bono piorum & malo impiorum utitur. — & quoniam hoc solius Dei omnipotentis opus est, hinc etiam nulli creaturarum, hoc epitheton in sacris literis tribuitur. Unde Hieronymus monuisse videtur non esse in aliam linguam transferendum, cum etiam apostoli illud non mutarint. Buxtorf. ib. S. 59, 60.

⁴ Dan. iv. 35.

often prefaces his prophecies with it; and is very properly given him; since he chose the people of *Israel*, above all people, to be his special people; and distinguished them from others, by many peculiar favours; he avouched them to be his people; and they avouched him to be their God; this was his Old Testament-name and title; and was almost out of date, as one observes^c; when *Zechariah*, the father of *John Baptist*, used it, who is the last that did; saying, *blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people^d*; for, quickly after, another name of his took place; which is, his New Testament-name and title; *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ^e*, used by the apostles *Paul* and *Peter*. God is *the God* of *Christ*, as *Christ* is man; the human nature of *Christ*, is a creature of God, the true tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man; and which he anointed, filled, and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, without measure; and *Christ*, as such, loved him, as his God, and obeyed his commands, from a law of love in his heart; him he hoped in from his mother's womb; and in him he believed, and had the strongest confidence in him, that he was near him, would help him, stand by him, and justify him; to him he prayed most fervently and frequently; some-

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^c Dr. Goodwin on Eph. i. 3. p. 27. ^d Luke i. 68.
^e 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 3, 17. and iii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 3.

times a whole night together ; and gave him thanks and praise for divers things, particularly for hiding the mysteries of grace from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to babes ; and was in all things obedient to his God, throughout the whole course of his life, even unto death. God is the *Father* of Christ, as Christ is a divine person ; and in such sense his Father, as he is to no other ; and Christ is in such sense his Son, and in such a class of filiation and sonship, as none others are, angels, or men ; angels are the sons of God by creation, saints by adoption : but *to which of them, one or another, said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee* ^f. Christ is his own proper, natural Son ; of the same nature with him ; the Son of himself ; *the Son of the Father, in truth and love* ^g ; and not in an improper, figurative, and metaphorical sense ; as magistrates, by office, are called the sons of God.

4. Christ himself may be signified by the name of the Lord ; in and by whom he is so clearly made known and revealed to men ; and in whom his name, his nature, and perfections are, as before observed ; and to whom belong all the same glorious names ; as the true God, God Almighty, Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, and the Holy One of *Israel* ; and who, besides these, has various precious and excellent names, worthy to be recorded. The
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^f Heb. i. 5.

^g 2 John, ver. 3.

first of these we meet with is *Shiloh*, in the famous prophecy of *Jacob*, *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come*^h; who is the true *Messiah*; which name, whether it has the signification of *prosperous* or *peaceable*ⁱ, it agrees with *Christ*; in whose hands the pleasure and will of *God*, respecting the salvation of men, prospered; and who succeeded in all his conflicts with sin, satan, and the world, and got the victory over them: and he is the prince of peace; the man, the peace; with whom the covenant of peace was made; on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and who has made peace by the blood of his cross. His name *Immanuel*, given him before his birth, when prophesied of, to be born of a virgin, is a very precious one; which is, by interpretation, *God with us*^k; *God* in our nature, *God* manifest in the flesh; and through which, being made, he dwelt among men; which is a most wonderful instance of condescending grace. Another name with which it is said he

^h Gen. xlix. 10.

ⁱ *Siloh*; quia princeps pacis, *Is. ix. 6.* præstans etiam pacem, ab accusatione & iugo legis, quam scilicet *legislatores* imponere poterant. *Cocceii Lexic. Col. 898.* *שלו* significat *quietus, tranquillus fuit*; item, *Salvus, felix, fortunatus fuit, prospere & feliciter egit*; hinc alii *שלו* aiunt notare, *pacificum, quietum* — alii *felicem*, eumque maxime talem quod nomine *Herois felicitis* indicare videntur. *Valand. Dissert. ad Gen. xlix. 10. apud Thesaur. Theolog. Philol. Vol. I. p. 273.*

^k *Matt. i. 23.*

he should be called is, *the Lord our righteousness*¹, because, as a surety, he undertook to bring in everlasting righteousness; and, therefore, it became him to fulfil all righteousness: and for this purpose, he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, to obey the law in our nature, and condemn sin in the flesh, by the sacrifice of himself, that the righteousness of the law might be completely fulfilled in us; and he is become the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes; and to whom he is also made righteousness, and they made the righteousness of God in him: and, not to forget that delightful name of *Jesus*, given to him because he saves his people from their sins; nor *Messiah*, which signifies Christ, or Anointed; he being anointed as prophet, priest, and king, with the oil of gladness, the Holy Ghost, and his grace, above his fellows; and from whom the saints receive the unction, that anointing, which teaches all things, and are denominated Christians. To this name of Christ the church seems to allude, when she says, *thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee*^m.

5. The name of the Lord sometimes designs the gospel; as, when Christ says to his Divine Father, *I have manifested thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the world*ⁿ; that is, his mind and will, which he

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¹ Jer. xxiii. 6. ^m Cant. i. 3. ⁿ Joh. xvii. 6.

revealed unto his disciples, having lain in his bosom, and being fully acquainted with it; the mysteries of his love and grace, which lay hid in his heart; the several doctrines of grace and truth, which relate to the great design of God in man's salvation, and came from God by him; for, this he afterwards explains, by saying, *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me* *; namely, the words of eternal life, or the doctrines respecting the everlasting welfare and salvation of men: so the Lord said to *Ananias*, concerning the apostle *Paul* †, *he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel*; which was no other, than to carry the gospel, and spread it, not only in *Judea*, but in the Gentile world; and abide by it, and continue preaching it; and bear a testimony to it, in the face of all opposition, from men of every rank, and of every nation. Now, from all this we may learn, in some measure, what we are to understand by the *name* of the Lord; which may be taken in the most comprehensive sense; as to include himself, his nature, and perfections, and every appellation by which he is manifested and known; his son, his person, offices, and grace, and all things relating to him; the gospel, and the various doctrines of it: all which, as they serve to celebrate the praise and glory of God, they

* John xvii. 8.

† Acts ix. 15.

they are to be recorded and remembered in every place, where the worship of God is set up; which leads me to observe,

Secondly, what is meant by the Lord's *re-
cording* his name, or causing it to be re-
membered; for so the words may be ren-
dered, *where I make mention of my name, or
where I cause to remember my name*; or, *you
to remember it* ⁴; that is, cause it to be re-
membered, or refresh the memories of men
with it: which is done by appointing and
setting up memorials of it.

1st. Under the legal dispensation, this was
done by ordering the ark, mercy-seat, and
cherubim, to be made, and to be placed first
in the tabernacle, and then in the temple.
These were symbols of the divine presence;
here the *Shekinah*, or the Divine Majesty,
took up its abode; from hence God com-
muned with men, and gave them intimations
of his mind and will; by which they were put
in mind of him, and directed where to apply
to him, in every time of need; and so pos-
sessed were the *Israelites* of this notion, that
God was where these were, that they would
sometimes take the ark with them when they
went

⁴ וְאֵי שָׁמָּה אֲנִי אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ שְׁמִי quo memorare faciam nomen
meum. *Pagninus, Alvarius*. Quocunque in loco monumentum
constitueris nomen meum. *Heb.* in omni loco ubi recordari fa-
ciam nomen meum, *scilicet*, ubi faciam ut recordemini nominis
mei. *Piscator*. Vel, faciam vos recordari nomen meum. *Carr-
swright*. So *dinworth*.

went to battle ; promising themselves thereby protection, safety, and victory. And these were, each of them, the ark and the mercy-seat, memorials of Christ, and served to put such as had knowledge of the Messiah, true faith in him, and expectation of his coming, in mind of him. The ark was a type of Christ, in the matter, form, and use of it ; it was made of *Shittim* wood, and overlayed with pure gold, denoting the incorruption, purity, glory, excellency, and duration of Christ ; its principal use was, to contain in it the testimony of the will of God, the two tables of stone, with the law of the ten commandments on them ; which were renewed by the Lord, after they were broken, by falling out of the hands of *Moses*, as he came down from the mount, when the people had sinned, and transgressed this law. The putting of that into the ark, signified the law being not only in the hands, but in the heart of Christ ; his voluntary subjection to it ; his perfect fulfilment of it ; whereby it was magnified, and made honourable ; all its demands being answered by him, its precepts obeyed, and its sanction yielded to ; and in whom it is preserved and continued, in all its perfection and lustre, and remains in full force, to answer the purposes for which it was given. The mercy-seat is also a type of Christ, and a memorial of him ; bringing him to remembrance,

brance, and refreshing the minds of true believers in him; leading them to some delightful views of the grace and mercy of God, as displayed in him. The same word which the *Greek* interpreters render the *Hebrew* word by, for the mercy-seat, is used by the apostle *Paul* concerning Christ, when he says of him, *whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation**, *ἱλαστήριον*, a mercy-seat. This was over the ark, in which the law was, a cover to it; and of the same length and breadth with it; shewing that Christ's obedience and propitiatory sacrifice, are commensurate to the law, and its requirements, and a covering of all the sins of God's people, for whom this sacrifice is offered, which are transgressions of the law, and through which God is gracious and merciful to sinners; for, though he has proclaimed his name, a God gracious and merciful, it is only in Christ; the special mercy of God is only communicated through Christ; there is no mercy to be expected but by him; the poor publican was in the right, when he prayed, *God be merciful*, *ἰλασθῆναι*, or *be propitious*, or shew mercy through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, *to me a sinner*. The stores of mercy are laid up in Christ; it is *for him*, for his sake, and with him, that he keeps his *mercy*, his covenant-grace and mercy, *for evermore*†: he is *the throne of grace*, or the mercy-seat,

to

* Rom. iii. 25.

† Luke xviii. 13.

‡ Ps. lxxxix. 28.

to which the saints should have recourse in all their *times of need*; and where, and where only they may expect to *find grace*, and *obtain mercy* ^v; yea, it is to this mercy-seat, to the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and for it, and to the mercy of God, displayed in him, they are to *look for*, and *unto eternal life* ^v.

Moreover, the altar, and the sacrifices offered on it, were typical of Christ, and memorials of him, and the means of recording the name of the Lord, and causing it to be remembered ^z; the altar was a type of Christ, as before observed; both the altar of burnt-offering, and the altar of incense; the one served to put believers in mind of the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ for sin; and the dolorous sufferings he underwent on that account, under a sense of the wrath of God, and to deliver his people from it, by bearing it in their room and stead, when he became a whole burnt-offering for them; and the other was of use, to observe unto them the intercession of Christ, founded on his propitiatory sacrifice; through whose much incense, or all-prevailing mediation, the prayers of the saints become acceptable unto God, and the blessings of grace are brought down upon them, and applied to them. The various sacrifices offered at the *Jewish* altar, were typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and were de-

^v Heb. iv. 16.
works, B. II. p. 341.

^v Jude, ver. 21.

^z See *Moses's*

designed to put the sacrificers in mind of it, and to lead their faith to it, without which theirs were unacceptable to God. The lambs of the daily sacrifice, in the morning and evening, were remembrancers of Christ the Lamb of God, who *taketh*, continually takes away the sins of men, committed by them. So the slaying of the passover-lamb, the burning of the red heifer, with all other sacrifices, whether offered every day, every month, or every year; they all pointed at Christ, and his sacrifice, whereby he has put away sin, and perfected for ever them that are sanctified: and now, by appointing and continuing these, Jehovah caused his name to be remembered; whose perfections were displayed and glorified in the sacrifice of his Son; to which the faith of his people were by these directed.

2dly, Under the gospel-dispensation, God records his name by the ministry of the word, and by the administration of ordinances.

1. By the word, and by the ministers of it; whose descriptive character is, *that make mention of the Lord* ^v, or cause him to be remembered, or are his remembrancers; which is much the same phrase that is here used: a principal part of their business is, to *admonish*; to be the monitors of men; to put them in mind, as the word used signifies ^e; to put

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^v If. lxii. 6.

^e 1 Theff. v. 12. *νουθετωσιν*.

them in mind of their privileges and duties ; to put them in mind of the grace of God, and the blessings of it ; of Christ, his person, offices, and grace, and of the several doctrines of the everlasting gospel, for their comfort and edification. So the apostle *Peter* determined, whilst he was *in this tabernacle*, in the body, in the present state of things, so long as he remained in the world, to *stir up* the saints, by *putting them in remembrance of these things*, though they *knew* them, and were *established* in them * ; and then may the ministers of the gospel be said to record the name of the Lord, and the Lord to record it, by them ; or cause it to be remembered, when,

(1.) They put those in mind, to whom they minister, of the love, grace, and mercy of God, displayed in salvation by Jesus Christ ; when, as God has proclaimed his name, a God gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin ; they also publish and proclaim the same grace and mercy of his, as it is shewn forth in the several parts and branches of salvation ; or, in other words, when they ascribe salvation, both in whole and in part, to the free grace and sovereign mercy of God in Christ. For instance, when they declare, that God's choice of men to holiness here, and happiness hereafter, is wholly owing to his everlasting love, and sovereign

sovereign will and pleasure ; when they assert there is such an act in God ; and that this is eternal ; that it passed before men had done either good or evil, and had no respect to either ; that the moving cause of it, are not the faith, or holiness, or obedience, and good works of men ; nor the foresight of any, or either of them ; that it does not stand upon the works of man, but upon the will of God ; and therefore truly called the *election of grace* ; and which the apostle most clearly evinces, by arguing in such a strong and nervous manner about it ; *if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace ; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work* ^b. Likewise, when they attribute the mission of Christ into this world, in order to obtain salvation for men, purely to the good-will, grace, and mercy of God, as the scriptures do ; which assure us, that it is owing to the *tender mercy of our God*, his bowels of compassion to sinful, miserable creatures, that *the day-spring from on high*, the Messiah, the sun of righteousness, whose rising, and coming here, made the glorious gospel-day, *has visited us* ^c ; by the beamings forth of his love and grace, in the assumption of our nature ; by sending forth the light of truth abroad in the world ; and dispelling the darkness of error, ignorance, and infidelity ; the design of whose appear-

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^b Rom. xi. 5, 6.^c Luke i. 78.

ance was not merely to deliver a system of doctrines, and to recommend them by his own example, but to suffer and die for us; and, by so doing, redeem us from sin and death, and everlasting ruin: and, his coming on such an errand, is entirely the fruit and effect of divine love; *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*, and sent him into the world, to be the propitiation, Saviour, and Redeemer; and *in this the love of God is manifested to us; herein is love*^d; this is a full proof and demonstration of it; and it appears the more illustrious and free, when it is observed, the persons that God gave his Son for, into the hands of justice, and death, and Christ died for, are represented, not only as without strength, but as ungodly, sinners, and enemies in their minds, by wicked works. Now, when the love, grace, and mercy of God, in this instance, are published, then is the name of the Lord proclaimed and recorded, as a God gracious and merciful. Also, when the blessings of justification, and pardon of sin, are referred to the same source and origin, spring and fountain, even the unmerited grace of God in Christ; for, though upon the account of the righteousness of Christ, and the imputation of it, God is *just*, whilst he is the *justifier of him that believes in Jesus*; and as justification proceeds upon, and *through the redemption that is*

^d John iii. 16. ^r John iv. 9, 10.

is in Christ; yet this hinders not but that is *freely* by the *grace* of God ^e; for it is *grace* that provided this righteousness, accepts of it, and imputes it; and it is the free gift of God to man; and so is faith itself, which receives it; ungodly men are justified by it; and this is imputed, without works, unto them: and then is the *grace* of God, in this article, exalted and magnified, when it is roundly declared, for which there is the greatest authority, that by the deeds of the law, no man is, or can be justified; but that justification is by faith in Christ's righteousness, without the works of it. And so pardon of sin, though through the blood of Christ, which was shed for it, it is an act of justice in God to forgive it: and he is *just* and *faithful* in doing it, on that account; yet it is *according to the riches of his grace*, and the *multitude of his tender mercies* ^f, that he forgives sin, even for Christ's sake: and then is the name of the Lord recorded, when forgiveness of sin is preached in the name of Christ; and the name of God is published and proclaimed, a God forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, freely, and fully, on his account. In short, this is done, when salvation is asserted to be not according to mens works, but according to the purpose and grace of God; when it is af-

^e Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26.
Ps. li. 1.

^f 1 John i. 9. Eph. i. 7.

affirmed, that it is not by works of righteousness the best men have done, and in the best manner, they are saved; but by the abundant mercy of God, through Christ; that it is by grace alone that salvation is, and not by works, lest any should boast; and that it is through faith; and that not of ourselves, for it is the gift of God. In a word; the name of God is recorded, when not the merits of men, but the mercy of God, is magnified; when not free will, but free grace, is preached; when salvation is said to be, not of him that willeth,* nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy; when regeneration is ascribed, not to the might and power of man, but to the spirit of the Lord of hosts; when men are taught to attribute all they have, and are, and do, to the grace of God; and to say with the apostle, *by the grace of God I am what I am*†; and when it is the drift of the ministry, and the concern of those in it, to display the riches of divine grace, and the glory of it; which is the ultimate end of God in the predestination, redemption, and salvation of men.

2. Then do ministers of the word record, make mention of, and cause to be remembered, the name of the Lord; and God does it by them when they preach Christ and him crucified, as God's alone way of salvation. This
was

was the course the first ministers of the gospel steered; they preached not themselves; as they did not seek themselves, so neither did they exalt themselves and others; they did not preach up the purity of human nature, the power of mans free will, the sufficiency of good works to justify before God, and to render acceptable in his sight; *but Christ Jesus the Lord^b*, as the only redeemer and saviour of lost sinners. Particularly, this was the resolution and determination of the great apostle of the gentiles: for so he says, writing to the *Corinthians*, *I determined to know*; that is, to make known, *nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified^c*; meaning, in the great affair and business of salvation; and this determination he abode by, notwithstanding all the opposition made unto him, and contempt that was cast on him for it: *we preach*, says he, *Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling, and to the Greeks^d foolishness*. Thus did he, and other preachers of the gospel, record the name of the Lord to good purpose wherever they came; and so do all such who make mention in their ministry of the glorious person of Christ, as God over all blessed for ever; as the true God, and eternal life; as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; whose glory is the glory of the only begotten of the Father; being

^b 2 Cor. iv. 5. ^c 1 Cor. ii. 2. ^d 1 Cor. i. 23.

ing in the glorious form, and having all the glorious perfections of deity in him. When they describe him as the God-man, as white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousands, and altogether lovely in his person and offices; when they speak of him, and direct unto him as the only mediator between God and man; in whom the saints are blessed with all spiritual blessings; through whom they have a participation of all grace here, and have both a right unto, and meetness for, eternal glory hereafter; who is now the way of access to the father, and of acceptance with him; and by whom all the sacrifices of prayer and praise are to be offered to God, and become acceptable to him; as well as he will be the medium of all that glory that shall be enjoyed hereafter: then also do they record the name of the Lord, and he by them, when they declare there is no other name given among men whereby they must be saved, than the name of Christ; that there is salvation in none but him; that it is in vain to hope for it in the multitude of hills and mountains, or from mens works, be they ever so many; even tho' they were piled up as mountains aiming at heaven, and seeking to reach it: and when this is the subject of their ministry, *the faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom,*
says

says the apostle, *I am^e chief*. When also they make mention of the righteousness of Christ, and him only, as the matter of a sinner's justification before God; when they preach, that thro' Christ and his righteousness believers are justified from all things they could not be by the law of *Moses*, and obedience to it: and then may they be said to *turn many to righteousness^f*; or to justify many, that is, by guiding and directing them alone to Christ for righteousness: likewise when they speak well of the precious blood of Christ, and direct souls to deal with it, for the remission of their sins; and shew that both justification and sanctification are thro' it; that peace and reconciliation are made by it; and a way is opened by means of it, into the holy of holies: moreover, when they exalt the sacrifice of Christ, and observe that all others, let them be of what nature they will among men, yet are insufficient to atone for sin; even thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil; yea, tho' the first-born should be given for transgression, and the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul; and that Christ's sacrifice alone has taken away sin; made an end of it, and made reconciliation for it; and that Christ, the lamb of God, is only to be looked unto as the sin-bearing, and sin-atoning saviour: To which may be added, tha this is the case, when the advoca-

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^e 1 Tim: i. 15.

^f Dan. xii. 3.

cacy of Christ is preached up ; or he is represented as the advocate with the father ; who appears in the presence of God, and ever lives to make intercession for his people ; introduces their persons into the presence of his father ; presents their petitions, and pleads for the blessings of grace to be applied to them they want ; and the supplies of grace to be granted them they stand in need of. To say no more, then do faithful dispensers of the word record the name of the Lord, and he by them, when they preach the pure gospel of Christ free, unmixed, and unadulterated ; when they do not corrupt the word, but sincerely preach it, as in the sight of God and Christ ; when their ministry is not yea and nay, but all of a piece ; consistent with itself, and with the word of God ; when the trumpet does not give an uncertain sound ; when only the joyful sound is heard ; peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation are clearly, openly, without reserve or disguise published and proclaimed.

2. Under the gospel-dispensation God records his name, by appointing ordinances, and by the administration of them, as memorials of his love and grace ; and particularly the ordinance of the Lord's supper ; and where that is truly administered, and carefully attended to, and the design of it answered, there the name of the Lord is caused to be remembered ; and the memories of men are
sweetly

sweetly and comfortably refreshed with it. This ordinance is a commemorative ordinance, causing to remember, or bringing to remembrance. The design of it is to put in mind of the love of God and Christ; of the love of God in the gift of his son, and of the love of Christ in the gift of himself; and it is hard to say which is the greatest instance of love, for God to give his son, his only begotten son, or for Christ to give himself, his soul and body, and both in union with his divine person; to lay down his life, to shed his blood, to offer himself a sacrifice unto God for us. The ordinance of the supper brings to our remembrance the love of the Father in providing his Son a lamb for a burnt-offering; in sending him into this world to be a saviour of his people; in not sparing him, but delivering him up into the hands of justice and death for us all; and all this, when and while we were sinners. It refreshes our memories with the love of Christ, in giving himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God, of a sweet smelling savour. It is not a reiteration of the sacrifice, an offering up again the body and blood of Christ; but a commemoration of it, and of the love of Christ in it: Hereby we perceive his love to us. It is very plain and evident that he laid down his life for us; it leads us to observe it as such an instance of love that is not to be found among men. *Greater love bath no man than this,*

that a man lay down his life for his ^z friends. But Christ has shewn greater love than this, by laying down his life for his enemies. Now, the elements or symbols in the Lord's supper, the bread and wine, are memorials of what Christ has done and suffered for his people; of his body being bruised and broken for them; of his blood being shed, and his soul poured out unto death on their account; and of his being stricken and smitten for their transgressions, and wounded for their sins; and of his bearing them and the punishment due unto them; and when the bread is eaten and the wine drank; they are both to be done by our Lord's direction, in remembrance of him, and of the above things, and of his love in all: and then is his name recorded, when his *love* is *remembred more than wine*^h; when saints call upon their souls, and all within them, to *blefs* his *holy name*, and not *forget* his *benefits*; especially the redemption of their lives from destruction by himⁱ. Now,

Thirdly, the places which God has a regard to, and where his people should meet and worship him, are where his name is recorded: This appears from what has been said. They are such where his free grace is set forth, magnified and exalted in the salvation of Men; where Christ crucified is preached, and the ordinances are truly and faithfully

^z Joh. xv. 13. ^h Cant. i. 3. ⁱ Pf. ciii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

fully administred : and when this is the case, it matters not what or where they are. Under the former dispensation there were particular places for worship, namely, wherever the tabernacle and ark were, and especially the city of *Jerusalem*, where the temple was built. But now we are not obliged to go to *Shiloh*, or *Gilgal*, or *Jerusalem*. The only descriptive character which points out a place to us, and directs us where to go and worship, is where the Lord records his name; or his ministers record it, by faithfully preaching his gospel, and administering his ordinances : and these are not limited and restrained to any place. It matters not whether the edifice we worship in, is greater or smaller, built in a less or more pompous manner ; nor what names it is called by ; whether a meeting-house, church, or chapel ; a conventicle or a cathedral : the only point is, is the name of the Lord recorded there ? For we find under the gospel-dispensation, the word has been used to be preached indifferently any where. Thus we may observe at one time, that our Lord *sat* upon a *mountain*, and delivered those excellent discourses contained in the *fifth*, *sixth*, and *seventh* chapters of *Matthew*. At another time he *sat* in a *ship*, and taught the multitude as they *stood* on the shore. And elsewhere we read of him preaching in a private house ; as well as he sometimes went into
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the *temple*, the then public place of worship ; and *sat* and *taught* ^k there. And so his apostles and disciples not only preached in the *synagogues* of the Jews as they had opportunity, but in other places not used before for religious worship. The apostle *Paul* disputed and discoursed in the school of *Tyrannus*, and continued this practice for the space of two years there ; so that all *Asia* had the opportunity of hearing the word of the Lord : And he also was two other whole years in his own hired house at *Rome*, preaching the kingdom of God, and the things concerning the Lord Jesus ^l Christ. I should now have entred on the second general head, but the consideration of that must be left to the afternoon.

^k Matt. v. 1. and xiii. 2. Mar. ii. 1, 2. Joh. viii. 2.
^l Act. xix. 9. and xxviii. 30, 31.

THE END OF THE FIRST SERMON.



S E R M O N II.

EXODUS XX. 24.

— *In all places, where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will blefs thee.*

TWO things have been observed in these words, and proposed to be treated of :

I. The place, or places, God has a regard unto ; and where his people should meet and worship him ; and that is, where he *records* his *name*.

II. The regard he has to such place, or places ; and the encouragement he gives his people to meet and worship him there ; expressed by his presence with them, and blessing on them, *I will come unto thee, and I will blefs thee.*

The first of these heads has been discoursed on this morning ; under which has been shewn, what is meant by the *name* of the
2 Lord ;

Lord ; which takes in his being, his nature, his perfections, and attributes, and every title and appellation, by which he is made known unto men. And also his son, in whom his name is ; and all his characters ; and likewise his gospel, which is a most glorious revelation of himself, and of his mind and will ; so that it includes every thing relating to his essence and glory ; to his son in whom ; and to his gospel, and the doctrines of it, by which he is declared and manifested ; especially in his grace and mercy to the children of men. Moreover, it has been enquired into, what is intended by *recording* his name, or causing it to be mention'd, or remembred. And it has been observed, that this was done by the Lord, under the Old Testament-dispensation, by appointing memorials of it ; such as the ark, and mercy-seat, the altar, and the sacrifices offered on it : and under the New Testament dispensation, by the ministry of the word, and the ministers of it ; whose business it is, to make mention of the name of the Lord, and put men in mind of him ; to publish and proclaim his free grace, good will, and favour, in the election, redemption, justification, and salvation of men ; and to preach Christ and him crucified ; to make mention of his person, as God-man ; of his offices, as Mediator and Saviour ; and of his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and intercession ; and purely, faithfully, constantly, and consistently,

to

to dispense the doctrines and mysteries of grace, they are stewards of: likewise, they record the name of the Lord, and he by them, through a faithful administration of his ordinances, especially the ordinance of the Lord's supper; which is designed to commemorate the grace of God, and the love of Christ, until his second coming. And now, where the riches of the grace of God are displayed; Christ, in his person and offices, is exalted; his word is faithfully preached; and his ordinances truly and rightly administered; these are the places where the Lord may be said to record his name, and where his people should meet together to worship him.

And, as we have now opened a new place of worship, we enter upon it in this way, by recording the name of the Lord, in the manner before described; namely, by preaching the doctrines of the grace of God, and of free and full salvation alone, by Jesus Christ; and by the administration of gospel-ordinances, as they have been delivered to us. To do these from time to time, is our present view, and what, by divine assistance, we shall endeavour to pursue, in the course of our worship and ministrations here. What doctrines may be taught in this place, after I am gone, is not for me to know; but, as for my own part, I am at a point; I am determined, and have been long ago, what to make the subject of my ministry. It is now upwards of forty years

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since I entered into the work of the ministry ; and the first sermon I ever preached, was from those words of the apostle, * *for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified* ; and, through the grace of God, I have been enabled, in some good measure, to abide by the same resolution hitherto, as many of you here are my witnesses ; and I hope, through divine assistance, I ever shall, as long as I am in this tabernacle, and engaged in such work. I am not afraid of the reproaches of men ; I have been inured to these, from my youth upwards ; none of these things move me. But I hope you will pardon this digression ; I return to my subject, and proceed to consider,

II. The regard which God has to such place, or places, where his name is recorded ; and the encouragement he gives his people, to meet and worship him there ; namely, the promise of his presence and blessing, *I will come unto thee and bless thee.*

First, The Lord here promises his presence with his people, assembled together in his name, and where his name is recorded, and they meet to worship him, to celebrate his name, to make mention of it, and put one another in remembrance of it, *I will come unto*

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

unto thee; that is, in such place, or places, where this is done. Under this head I shall endeavour to shew, in what sense the Lord may be said to *come* unto his people, when gathered together for religious worship; under what considerations he comes unto them; and when it may be known that he is come unto them, and is in the midst of them; as well as the wonderfulness of this grace and favour; which will appear, by observing the contrast between the *I*, the person who says he will come; and the *thee*, or persons to whom he comes.

1. What is meant by his *coming* to his people. And this is to be understood not locally, of any change of place; or of his removing from place to place, which he is incapable of, being omnipresent. The Jews call God *Makom*, *place*^b; because he is every
G 2 where,

^b Apud Rabbinos מקום, inter nomina Dei est, & quidem cum articulo המקום, per antiphrasin. quasi *illocalis, infinitus*, qui nullo loco capitur, sed omnibus rebus locum dat. Buxtorf. in rad. קום, p. 673. Vid. Pirke Abot. c. 5. f. 4. & 6. 1. The reasons of this name given by the Jewish writers, are these; says *Aben Ezra* *, our ancients, of blessed memory, call him (God) the *place*; because every place is full of his glory; and *R. Hona*, in the name of *R. Ame*, says, † why do they surname the holy blessed God, and call him מקום *place*? because he is the place of the world; and there is no world his place, but what is written, *behold, there is a place by me*, Exod. xxxiii. 21. And elsewhere ‡ it is asked likewise, why is his name called *place*? because in every place where the righteous are, there is he found with them; as it is said, *in every place where I record my name*, &c. Exod. xx. 24.

* Præfat. in Comment. in Esther. fol. 60. 4.

† Bereshit Rabba. S. 68.

‡ Pirke Eliezer, c. 35. fol. 38. 2. *

where, and fills up all places; the heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool; and neither of them can contain him; he fills both with his presence, and is not circumscribed by either: so that he cannot, with propriety, be said to come or go from one place to another: when he is said to descend, or come down from heaven to earth, it is not by local motion, but by some display and effects of his power, or of his grace and goodness. Thus, when he said, *c let us go down*, and it is said, *he came down to see the city and tower the children of men were building*, this was done in a way of wrath and judgment; by shewing his power, and by confounding their language, and scattering them abroad, upon the face of the whole earth: and when the Lord is said *d* to descend, and stand at the door of the tabernacle, to meet his people there, it is to be understood of displays of his grace, discoveries of his love, and intimations of his favour; and of his mind and will; and which is greatly the sense of the expression here: for, it is not to be taken neither in a corporeal sense, as if any bodily shape was assumed by the Lord, and he appeared in it. Indeed, this is the sense of all those passages, which speak of, and foretel the coming of Christ, and contain the promise of it; such as, *your God will come, even God with a recompence; he will come, and save you;*

^c Gen. xi. 5, 7.

^d Exod. xxix. 42. and xxxiii. 9.

you; and again, *behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand*^c; but these only belong to the second person in the trinity, the son of God, and his incarnation; to his coming into the world, by the assumption of human nature; to the word, being made flesh, and so dwelling among men; but cannot be said of *Jehovah*, the Father, who is the person speaking in our text, and who never appeared in any corporeal form; for Christ expressly says, *ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape*. Nor is this coming of the Lord to his people, to be understood now of any visible token of his presence, as in former times; as in a cloud, or by fire, or any other way. Thus he came to *Moses* in a thick cloud; and descended on mount *Sinai* in fire^d. These were indications of his being come, and of his being present. So he went before the children of *Israel*, as they travelled through the wilderness, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night^e. When these were seen, it was known the Lord was there; when the tabernacle was set up, *a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle*^f. The cloud was a visible symbol of the presence of the Lord in it; and the same may be observed of the temple of *Solomon* at the dedication of it by him;
the

^c If. xxxv. 4. and xl. 10.^f John v. 37.^d Exod. xix. 9, 18.^e Exod. xiii. 21.^f Exod. xl. 34.

*the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord^k: and it was the cloud, as is plain, that was the visible token of that glory, or of the glorious presence of the Lord there. Sometimes God gave intimations of his presence with his people, and of his approbation of them, and their sacrifices, by sending down fire upon them; and which is thought by some^l, to be the way and manner, in which he expressed his acceptance of *Abel's* sacrifice. However, in this way he did signify his acceptance of others: it is said, ^m *and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people; and there came fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar, the burnt-offerings, and the fat; which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces; in reverence of the Divine Being, who was present by this symbol; and they shouted for joy, and in thankfulness, for his declaring his approbation and acceptance of the sacrifices. And in like manner, the Lord shewed himself to be present, and to be the only Lord God, by causing fire to fall down and consume the sacrifice, the wood, stones, and dust, and lick up the water in the trench, when *Baal* could do nothing to make it manifest that he heard his prophets, or was present with themⁿ.**

But

^k 1 Kings viii. 10, 11.
ⁿ Lev. ix. 23, 24.

^l See *Ainsworth* on Gen. iv. 4.
^m 1 Kings xviii. 38, 39.

But nothing of this kind is now to be expected, under the gospel-dispensation; the Lord's coming to his people, is only in a spiritual manner; by his Spirit and grace, and the communications of it; by his Spirit teaching, and instructing, enlightening, comforting, quickening men, and applying his word with power; and blessing that and his ordinances to them; in like manner as Christ promised his presence to his disciples, *I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you* °; meaning, that though they should be deprived of his bodily presence, yet they should have his spiritual presence with them, especially when ministering his word, and administering his ordinances; and in this sense it is to be understood in a following verse; where he promises his presence to all that love him, and keep his commandments, and his father's also; saying, *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*; which cannot design the return of his bodily presence to his disciples, at his resurrection; but the gracious and spiritual presence of him, and his divine Father, with his people, in all ages; particularly, while they are employed in his worship, and are observing his commands and ordinances: and it is in this sense we may understand the expression in this passage; especially as it may be applied to gospel-times.

2. It

° John xiv. 18.

¶ ver. 23.

2. It may be enquired, under what considerations God may be said to come unto his people, in this gracious and spiritual manner, whilst worshipping him. He comes unto them, as into his own house and habitation ; and that as the master, owner, and proprietor of it ; his church and people are *built up, an habitation* for him, *through the spirit* ; believers are the *lively stones*, of which the *spiritual* house consists ; and these being laid on the foundation, Christ, *grow up unto an holy temple in the Lord*¹ ; and for his use ; and whither he comes ; and of which he says, *this is my rest ; here will I dwell, for I have desired it*² ; and from this time forward, that God takes up his abode and residence here, the name of such a place, city, and church, is, *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there³ : he comes unto them, as unto his family ; as the father of it, who cares and provides for it ; he is their father by adopting grace ; and has taken them into this relation, in the everlasting covenant, to which he predestinated them, according to the good pleasure of his will ; in which he says of them, and to them, *I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*⁴ ; and which grace he makes known unto them by the spirit of adoption, sent unto them : in consequence of this, he will not leave them

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¹ Eph. ii. 21, 22.

² Ezek. xlviii. 35.

³ Ps. cxxxii. 14.

⁴ 2 Cor. vi. 18.

comfortless, or orphans, as is Christ's word ^u concerning them; but *will come* unto them, in a spiritual way, as he promises; and shew his paternal love to them, and care of them, bringing food in his hands for them; asking one and another of them, *children, have ye any meat* ^w? and puts it into their hands and mouths, and blesses *Zion's* provisions, the word and ordinances to them, and satisfies his poor with bread; with the bread of the gospel; with the bread of life, Christ Jesus. He comes unto them as to his flock, and as the shepherd of it; it being under his peculiar watch and care, and he the proprietor of it: his own the sheep are, the sheep of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture: to these he comes; and he looks well to this his flock; and inspects narrowly and carefully into their state, case, and condition: he comes to search and seek out those that are straying, and scattered in the dark and cloudy day; to look up that which is lost and driven away, and restore them, and lead them into green pastures, and besides the still waters; to bind up broken hearts, and broken bones, and strengthen the sick, and heal all their spiritual maladies, and do all the offices of a good shepherd to them; by feeding them in a good pasture, and making them to lie down in a good fold ^x. He comes unto them, as to his friends, and pays
H kind

^u ἐσφάρατε, John xiv. 18.

^w John xxi. 5.

^x Ezek. xxxiv. 12—16.

kind visits ; he makes a feast of fat things for them, in his holy mountain ; he brings them into his banqueting house ; he sits down at table with them ; he sups with them, and they with him ; whom he welcomes to the entertainment he makes for them ; saying, *eat, O friends ; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved* ^v. To observe no more ; he comes unto his people met together for worship, as his special favourites ; for whom he has a peculiar respect, and admits to peculiar nearness to himself, and to peculiar enjoyments ; whom he remembers with the favour he bears to his chosen ones ; having loved them with an everlasting love, and distinguished them by the blessings of his grace, bestowed upon them ; to those he loves, he shews his covenant ; the blessings and promises of it, and their interest in them ; discloses the secrets of his heart's love unto them, and sheds it abroad in them ; makes known more fully to them, the great salvation, and restores unto them the joys of it ; indulges them with near and intimate communion with himself ; and manifests himself to them, as he does not unto the world : by all which it appears, they are the delight of his soul, and the darling of his heart ; the favourites of heaven, and friends of God.

3. It may be asked, how it may be known when God is come unto his people, in a spi-

^v Cant. i. 12. and ii. 4. and v. 1.

spiritual manner, in public service and worship? In answer to which, it may be said, that it may be in some measure known, when the ministers of the word are assisted by him, both in praying and preaching; when they manifestly pray with the spirit, and with the understanding, and have their hearts enlarged in prayer; and are directed to suitable petitions for those they represent; and have much freedom in their own souls, and much nearness to God, and familiarity with him; and when they have, in their ministrations to the people, presence of mind, liberty of expression, a door of utterance, and fulness of matter; when they are brought forth in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, and they are not straitened in themselves; but find a pleasure in their work, and have their own hearts affected and warmed; which may not only be felt by themselves, but be discerned by others. Also, the presence of God may be observed, when the word preached by them, is owned for conviction and conversion; when under it, men are pricked to the heart, and set a seeking after the right way of salvation; as the three thousand under *Peter's* sermon, on the day of *Pentecost*; and as those in *Cornelius's* house, on whom the spirit of the Lord fell, while the same apostle was preaching; when the spirit of God effectually convinces men, by means of the word, of sin and the evil nature

of it; lays open all the sinfulness of their hearts, and brings to their remembrance the iniquities of their lives; and they are told, as the woman of *Samaria* was by Christ, all that ever they did; and then being *convinced*, and *judged of all*, and *the secrets of their hearts made manifest*, as if the minister had privately been acquainted with their lives and characters, they *fall down on their faces*, and *worship God*, and *report that God is in his ministers*, and with his people, *of a truth*². Likewise, this appears to be the case, when the gospel is not only the means of faith, by which it comes, as it does by hearing the word; for when the hand of the Lord, or his power, goes along with his ministers, and accompanies his word, then men believe; but, when it is increased thereby; when the word is food for faith; when there are in souls a desire after the sincere milk of the word; an appetite for it; a gust and relish of it; when it is found under the ministry of it, and is eaten by faith, and is the joy and rejoicing of the heart; when it is not only received by faith, in the love of it, but is mixed with it, and digested by it; and so becomes very nourishing, strengthening, and edifying. Moreover, this may be discerned, that God is come unto, and is present with his people, at such times, when their affections are moved and raised, and their minds enlightened, and judg-

judgments informed and established in the truth of the gospel; when these two go together, raised affections, and instructed minds; for it is dangerous to have them separated; when the word is like fire, and at once both warms the heart and illuminates the mind; and when, at the same time, the *hearts* of God's people *burn within* them; as did the hearts of the two disciples, that travelled with Christ to *Emmaus*, while he *talked with them by the way*, and *opened to them the scriptures*^a; the eyes of their understandings are enlightened, and the veil is removed from them, and they behold *wondrous things out of the law*^b, or doctrine of the gospel; when the Lord opens their understandings, that they may understand the scriptures, as Christ did his disciples; and the spirit of the Lord leads them into all truth, as it is in Jesus; and applies it powerfully and comfortably to them, and they are established and confirmed therein; and then ere they are *aware*, their affections are caught, and these rise up, *like pillars of smoke perfumed with frankincense*, and their souls are like *the chariots of Amminadib*^c; are on the full speed upwards, heaven-ward, and God-ward. Again; then may the presence of God be perceived by his people, in public worship, whilst attending the word and ordinances; when the promises of the gospel are

^a Luke xxiv. 34.^b Ps. cxix. 18.^c Cant. iii. 6, and vi. 12.

are opened and applied ; when a word that is sent unto *Jacob*, lights on *Israel* ; when a word is spoken in season to weary souls, and it suiteth to their case and circumstances, and is so understood and observed ; and which gives peculiar pleasure and delight, and yields a joy unspeakable, and full of glory ; *for a word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver*^d. And so it appears very sensibly, when the love of God is again manifested ; when the experiences of the saints are renewed and confirmed ; when fresh light is thrown upon the work of grace on their hearts, and the evidence of it is clear ; and in *Jehovah's* light they see light, and are satisfied of the truth of grace in them ; when the desires of their souls are drawn out after God, and their hearts pant after him, as the hart pants after the water-brook ; and after the name of Christ, and the remembrance of it : and they are indulged with intimate communion and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ ; and have some fresh pledges and tokens of their love to them. And now, it is this which makes the house of God delightful, the *tabernacles* of the Lord *amiable* and lovely ; a *day* in his courts *better than a thousand* elsewhere ; yea, to be more eligible, to be a *door-keeper* in the house of God, than to *dwell in the tents* of sin and wickedness : it is the presence of God and Christ ; the discoveries

^d Prov. xxv. 11.

veries of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit ; the rich displays of divine grace, and those interviews which believers have with God ; and the sweet fellowship they have with him, and one another, that makes wisdom's *ways ways of pleasantness*, and *all her paths paths of peace* ^e ; yea, amidst such spiritual and ravishing enjoyments as these, of a place of religious worship, it may be truly said, *this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven* ^f.

4. The wonderfulness of enjoying such a favour, as to have God come to his people, and be with them, in a spiritual manner, in places where they meet to worship him, will appear, by considering the contrast between the great Jehovah, who promises to come unto them, and does ; and the persons he comes unto, and who enjoy his gracious presence. The one is the Creator of the ends of the earth ; the maker and former of all things visible and invisible ; the earth, the sea, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, and all that in them are ; the angels of heaven, men on earth, the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the cattle on a thousand hills ; with whom, and before whom, and in comparison of him, all the nations of the world are as a drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance ; nay, are as nothing ; yea, less than nothing, and vanity.

And,

^e Ps. lxxxiv. 10. Prov. iii. 17.

^f Gen. xxviii. 17.

And, on the other hand, those he comes unto, and pays them a visit, and graciously converses with, are creatures of his; dust, earth, and worms: it is marvellous he should cast an eye upon them; with whom it is a condescension, a humbling of himself, to look upon things in heaven; it is amazing he should care for them, in a providential way, support them in their beings, follow them with his goodness and mercy, and bestow upon them daily the bounties of his providence; with respect to which, it is with wonder said, *What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?* But how must the wonder rise and increase, when it is observed, that this great and glorious Being, that has given being to all worlds, and creatures in them, vouchsafes to come unto such poor nothing ones, in a way of special grace and kindness; and communes with them in a spiritual manner, and tells them how he loves them, and has loved them, with an everlasting love; unbosoms himself to them, and communicates the riches of his grace, and assures them of their right and title to everlasting glory and happiness! Moreover, he who promises to come, and does come, to his people, worshipping at his footstool, is the *possessor of heaven and earth*^a; as he has made them

^s Job vii. 17, 18.^a Gen. xiv. 22.

them both, he has a right to each; the one he has reserved to be an habitation for himself; the other he has given to the children of men; the one he has made his throne to sit on; the other his footstool to tread on; and both are his property, and at his dispose, with all things in them; the riches of both worlds are his; and yet these riches are nothing to the perfections of his nature he is possessed of. And now, this *high and holy one*, that *inhabits eternity*, and *dwells in the high and holy place* ⁱ, and not in temples made with hands, is graciously pleased to come unto poor frail mortals, that dwell in earthly tabernacles, in cottages of clay, which have their foundations in the dust, and visit *beggars upon the dunghil*; from whence he takes them, and sets them with *princes*, that they may inherit *the throne of glory* ^k; as well as takes up his abode with such that are of *an humble and contrite spirit*; to *revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite one*. He who condescends to come unto his people, and be seen in the midst of them, is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; the Lord of the whole universe, whose the kingdom of nature and providence is, and who is the governor among the nations; that presides over all kings and princes, and over all kingdoms and states; who sits enthron'd in the highest heavens, and does what he pleases in heaven

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and

ⁱ Is. lvii. 15.^k 1 Sam. ii. 8.

and earth ; and orders all things after his sovereign pleasure ; and whose will cannot be resisted, or his power controuled, or his hand stayed ; or he to be called to an account for any thing done by him ; nor does he, nor will he, give any account of his matters to the sons of men ; but all are, and must be, accountable to him ; kings and governors ; those in the highest, as well as in the lowest class of life. Now, it is this great and universal monarch, that vouchsafes to descend from heaven, in the displays of his love and grace, and shew himself among the *poor of this world*, though *rich in faith*, and *heirs of the kingdom*¹ ; to come and make known himself, his son and gospel, and open the treasures of his grace, to persons who, in the esteem of men, are *things that are not*, and are reckoned by them *the filth of the world*, and *the offscouring of all things*^m. It would seem strange, and be very surprizing, and be thought an instance of wonderful condescension, should an earthly king go in a public manner, in his royal robes, and with his attendants, to the cottage of a poor peasant ; there enter, sit down, eat and drink, and freely converse with him for an hour or two ; and yet, this is not to be mentioned with this wondrous favour of the King eternal, immortal, the blessed and only potentate, shewing himself in the assemblies of his saints, sitting down at table with them, and

¹ James ii. 5.^m 1 Cor. i. 28. and iv. 13.

and communing with them from above the mercy-seat; where they behold the King in his beauty, being held forth in the galleries of the ordinances; and sometimes in so glorious a manner, that they with wonder and rapture say, *how glorious was the king of Israel to day* ? Once more; he who promises to come, and does come, and is among his people, while worshipping him, is a holy, just, and righteous Being; a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with any approbation or pleasure, or so as not to correct or punish for it; who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; glorious, as in all the perfections of his nature, so more especially in his holiness; being perfectly pure, unspotted, and untarnished, just and true, and without any iniquity at all: and yet, the persons he deigns to come unto, and take up his residence among, are sinful men; such as have sinned in *Adam*, and are made sinners by his disobedience; who are conceived, shapen, and born in sin; and are by nature, corrupt, depraved, polluted, and guilty creatures, and so children of wrath, as others; who have in time past lived according to the course of this world, in sin and wickedness, serving divers lusts and pleasures; and though now called by grace, yet have sin dwelling in them, and are frequently guilty of transgressing the law of God, in thought, word, or deed; and are

often revolting and backsliding from God, and doing those things which might justly provoke the eyes of his glory; and yet he is pleased to come unto them, and take up his dwelling with them. Now, there is nothing that can account for all this, but his being the God of all grace; a God gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth; a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, as he has proclaimed himself; it can be ascribed to nothing else but to his free, rich, sovereign grace; not to any deserts of men, or on account of any service done by them; which when done in the best manner, is unprofitable, with respect to him. It is all marvellous loving kindness; it may well be wondered at, for it can't be accounted for in any other way, but on the foot of free and unmerited grace. *Solomon* at the dedication of his temple, said, *but will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; how much less this house that I have built* ° ? It is wonderful that such an infinite and incomprehensible Being should dwell on earth; it is more wonderful, that he should dwell with men on earth; it is more wonderful still, that he should dwell with sinful men here. But yet, since he has said, *he will come* unto his people, where his name is recorded, it may be expected and believed he will; for he is a faithful

• 1 Kings viii. 27.

faithful God, a covenant-keeping God, true to every word of promise made by him; he'll not suffer his faithfulness to fail; he cannot deny himself, nor will he alter any thing that is gone out of his lips: Christ has promised, that where his people, though ever so few, are gathered together in his name, and where his ministers preach in his name, and ordinances are administered in his name, and in the name of his Father, and of the blessed Spirit, he'll be with them, even unto the end of the world ^p: and he has not only promised for himself, but for his Divine Father also, that such as keep his commandments, from a principle of love to him, they will come unto them, and make their abode with them ^q; and this being promised, may be most surely depended upon. If the Lord says, he will come, nothing shall hinder his coming: not Satan; he may hinder, as he sometimes has hindered the ministers of the gospel from coming to the churches, and ministering to them, for their comfort and edification; as he hindered the apostle *Paul*, and others, from going to *Thessalonica*; as he affirms, *Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again, but Satan hindered us* ^r; but, when God says he will come, and is resolved to come, and pay a gracious visit to his people, Satan, and all his principalities and

^p Matt. xviii. 20. and xxviii. 19, 20.

^q John xiv. 23.

^r 1 Thess. ii. 18.

and powers, cannot hinder : if any thing, the sins of God's people are most likely to hinder his coming to them ; as they sometimes are the cause of his departure from them, and of their not having sensible communion with him ; *your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you* *. But when it is his pleasure to come among his people, and indulge them with his gracious presence, even these shall not hinder ; he'll come *leaping on the mountains, skipping on the hills* †, of all their sins and transgressions, revoltings and backslidings, indolence, negligence, and unbelief. So much for the first instance of God's regard to places where his name is recorded, and the first argument used, to encourage his people to meet and worship him there. I proceed,

Secondly, to consider the other instance and argument made use of, the promise of blessing them ; and *I will bless thee*. God when he comes unto his people, and pays them a visit, he does not come empty-handed ; he brings a blessing, or blessings, along with him. And,

1. His very coming to them, his presence itself, is a blessing ; a wish for this, is the sum and substance of the blessing of the high-priest, pronounced over the children of *I'rael*, and on their account ; *the Lord bless thee, and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee*,

* If. lix. 2.

† Cant. ii. 8.

thee, and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace^u. It is the presence of God, the displays of his grace and power, the shine of his face, and the light of his countenance, that fill every petition ; and, indeed, a greater blessing than these cannot be enjoyed. Nothing is more desirable to a gracious soul, than the presence of God ; be he where he will, or come and go where he will ; this is what he is importunate for, that it might be with him ; as *Moses* said, *if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence*^w. It signifies nothing where such a man is, or what he has, if he has not the presence of God ; this is better to him than life, and all the enjoyments of it ; whilst others are saying, *who will shew us any good ?* any good, any temporal good ; any of the good things of this life will satisfy a worldly mind, but not a gracious heart ; such will say, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us ;* and, when this favour is granted, and enjoyed, they will add, with praise and thankfulness, *thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased*^z. No temporal mercy can so delight the heart of a good man, as the presence of God, and communion with him ; his absence is darkness, and death ; his
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^u Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26.^w Exod. xxxiii. 14.^z Psalm iv. 6, 7.

presence is light, and life ; it is night when he withdraws himself, and that causes weeping ; it is morning when he appears again, and that brings joy ; this was the experience of the psalmist, *for his anger endureth but a moment ; in his favour is life ; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning* ^y. This might be exemplified in the case of *Mary Magdalen*, weeping at the sepulchre of Christ, when her Lord was taken away from her, and she knew not where he was laid ; and of the disciples sorrowing, during the time of Christ's lying there ; but, when he was risen again, and appeared to them, the one, exulting, said, *Rabboni*, which is to say, master ; O my dear Master, is it thou ? and of the other, it is said, *then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord* ^z ; nothing more desirable, nothing more delightful, than the presence of God and Christ ; nothing so much like heaven as this ; this perfectly and everlastingly enjoyed, is heaven ; *in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore* ^a. Wherefore, it is no wonder that this should be *the one thing*, that should be uppermost on the hearts of God's people, when they are worshipping in his sanctuary ; that they may see his face, *behold his beauty*, and have a view of his *power* and his *glory* ^b ; as they have some-
times

^y Ps. xxx. 5.

^a Ps. xvi. 11.

^z John xx. 13, 16, 20.

^b Ps. xxvii. 4. and lxiii. 2.

times seen them there with inexpressible pleasure and satisfaction: and when they are thus favoured, they are blessed indeed! this is an antidote against all fears; they have nothing to be afraid of from all their enemies, men or devils, the rage of the one, or the reproaches of the other; or the severest persecutions; nor indeed, any affliction, trial, or exercise; nay, tho' they walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, since God is with them; as he is, when they pass even thro' fire and water; wherefore since he says to them, *fear not, I am with thee, be not dismayed, I am thy God*^u; they may say in return, *the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid*^w? and particularly, there is no need to fear any enemy, within or without, whilst worshiping him, since he is present: for, *if God be with us, and for us, who shall, or can be against us*^x?

2. The Lord blesses his people with fresh supplies of grace: what they have received, tho' it is much, and very abundant, yet not sufficient; as they are called to fresh duty and service, they want more grace; particularly to assist them in the duties of religion; in acts of public worship; in waiting upon God, and serving him in his sanctuary: to do this aright they have need to have grace in their hearts, and that in exercise, and a

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fresh

^u If. xli. 10. ^w Ps. xxvii. 1. ^x Rom. viii. 31.

fresh supply of it; that they may worship him in spirit and in truth; in righteousness and holiness; acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; and they may expect a supply of it from him. *My God, says¹ the apostle, shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Jesus Christ.* The people of God are full of wants; they have many indigencies; they always stand in need of more grace; and never do they need more than when they are engaged in the public exercises of religion; to keep their hearts from wandering from God, and intent upon his word; to enable them to receive it in love, and mix it with faith; and in all, to seek the glory of God: and they may hope to have it, since God, their covenant-God and Father, is the *God of all grace*; and is *able to make all grace to abound towards them*; that they *having all sufficiency of it, may abound in every good work²*; whether performed in a more public, or in a more private way: and he has promised to give more grace to the humble dependents on him, and worshippers of him. Christ the mediator is *full of Grace*; all fulness of it is laid up in him to be distributed to his people, whenever they want it; and as they have already received from thence, *and grace for grace³*, or an abundance of it, they may have more by application to him for it: for he

is

¹ Phil. 4. 19. ² 2 Cor. ix. 8. ³ Joh. i. 14, 16.

is a *sun and shield*; he will give *grace*^b; more grace to them that seek unto him: and there are the means of grace, the word and ordinances, which are the *golden pipes*; thro' which the *golden oil*^c of grace is communicated from Christ unto his saints; and there is the *throne of grace*, which they may come *boldly* to at all times, that they may obtain *mercy*, and find *grace to help them in time of need*^d; and to have a full supply of grace at such a time; as every time we worship God is, is a blessing indeed!

3. The Lord blesses his people when he comes unto them, while they are waiting upon him, and worshipping him, with peace: it is said *the Lord will bless his people with peace*^e; as if this was the one and only blessing he blesses them with; or, at least, the chief and principal one: and, indeed, it is a very comprehensive blessing; it includes all prosperity, temporal and spiritual; and all kind of peace, outward and inward; especially peace of conscience, tranquillity and serenity of mind; that *peace of God* which he is the author and giver of; *that passeth all understanding*^f; of natural and unconverted men, who know not the way of peace; are strangers to, and intermeddle not with the joy those have that believe in Christ. This peace is from God; whence he is called *the*

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God

^b Ps. lxxxiv. 11. ^c Zech. iv. 12. ^d Heb. iv. 16.

^e Ps. xxix. 11. ^f Phil. iv. 7.

God of peace^g; who is not only at peace with his people thro' the blood of Christ, but gives peace unto them; and indeed, he only can give it; wherefore it is asked of him: and if ever it is had, it must come from him. This is a frequent prayer of the apostles for the churches, *grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*^h. It is to no purpose to apply for it, or expect it elsewhere; and if he gives it, none can take it away; nor even disturb it, unless he suffers it: *when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble*ⁱ? In vain, do satan or the world, or any other enemy, seek to hinder the one, or make the other. This peace is thro' Christ; who is not only the prince of peace, the man, the peace, who is our peace, and has made peace by the blood of his cross; but gives it to his followers; even such peace as the world can neither give, nor take away; and which he continues with them amidst all their tribulations in this world: it flows from him, and from God thro' him; thro' his precious blood, which speaks better things than that of *Abel*; which speaks pardon, and so peace, to guilty souls; and by removing guilt, settles and secures peace; and thro' his righteousness, by which being justified, souls come to have peace with God thro' Christ; and are in no fearful apprehensions of present or future wrath; and thro'

^g Heb. xiii. 20. ^h Rom. i. 7. ⁱ Job, xxxiv. 29.

thro' the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ; in the view of which they joy in God, thro' him, by whom they have received the atonement of all their sins and transgressions; the consequence of which must be peace and joy: And this great blessing, in which the comfort and happiness of the spiritual life so much consists, is enjoyed in a way of believing: the more faith, the more conscience-peace, and spiritual joy: it is assured as being what God has promised, *thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stay'd on thee; because he trusteth in thee*^k; and it is a prayer of faith, and when so made, it may be expected it will be answered, *the God of hope fill you with all joy, and peace in believing*^l; and it is the experience of the saints, that the more faith is in exercise, in religious duties, in prayer, in hearing of the word, or in attendance on any ordinance; the more spiritual peace is enjoyed: And which blessing the believer is often favoured with, in public worship; in performing the duties of the house of God; and, in observing his commands and ordinances: for tho' there is no reward *for* keeping them, yet *in keeping of them* there is *great reward*^m; and this reward is peace of mind; and a sufficient one it is; and which all the Lord's people are blessed with, more or less, that keep close to him

^k If. xxvi. 3. ^l Rom. 15. 13. ^m Ps. xix. 11.

him in his own ways, and pay a proper and constant regard to his institutions and appointments. *Great peace have they which love thy law*, or doctrine; the doctrine of faith; the doctrine of the gospel; and shew their love by a close and constant attention to it, and to the ordinances of it; *nothing shall offend them*^a; disturb their peace, and interrupt their joy; they shall walk comfortably in the light of God's countenance; go on their way rejoicing in Christ; feeling in their breasts a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and so by good experience, they find the truth of this, that wisdom's paths are *paths of peace*^o.

4. Another blessing God blesses his people with, who meet and worship him in places where his name is recorded, is the free and full forgiveness of their sins: This is only of God; none can forgive sin but him, against whom it is committed; whose law is transgressed, and whose justice is affronted: Were there any that could, they would be such as were like him, at least in this respect; whereas there are none. *Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage*?! there is none like him for it; and this he does of his rich grace and mercy; and for the sake of Christ, his blood, sacrifice, and satisfac-

^a Pf. cxix. 165. ^o Prov. iii. 17. ^p Mic. vii. 18.

satisfaction: Hence the apostle exhorts the saints to forgive one another, *even as God, for Christ's sake*, saith he, *hath forgiven you*¹: and tho' this is done at once, and for all sins together; yet as every fresh commission of sin occasions fresh guilt to rise in the conscience, there is need of a renewed application of pardoning grace and mercy; which believers are sometimes favoured with, thro' the public ministrations of the word; where the name of the Lord is recorded, and the blessings of his grace are published; and this among the rest. Thus when the prophet *Isaiab* was cast down under a sense of the pollution and guilt of sin; when in a visionary way he was in the temple of the Lord; one of the *seraphim*, an emblem of gospel ministers, took a *live coal from the altar*, expressive of the expiating blood, and atoning sacrifice of Christ, and *touched his lips with it*, saying, *thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged*²; signifying in a declarative way, according to the tenor of the everlasting gospel, and the doctrine of pardon in it, that his iniquity, of which he was truly sensible, was forgiven for the sake of the atoning sacrifice of the lamb of God; and in this way, and at such seasons, namely, under the ministry of the word, is the pardon of sin sometimes applied and sealed to the consciences of God's people; and

¹ Eph. iv. 32.² Is. vi. 5, 6, 7.

and a special blessing this is: *blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*^a: This is a chief and principal blessing in the covenant of grace; it stands first in the article of redemption; yea, redemption by the blood of Christ, is made chiefly to consist of it; that is explained by it; *in whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*^b: the doctrine of it, is a main and principal one, in the ministration of the gospel; one of the first ordered to be preached and published in it; and is of the utmost importance; and it is among the first rate blessings we are to call upon our souls to be thankful and bless God for. On this much of the peace, the comfort of the people of God depend: when he would have them comforted, it is by telling them that their iniquity is pardoned; and when he would have them be of good cheer, it is by assuring them their sins are forgiven; without which they cannot: but this will make the bones that are broken to rejoice; and will cure every soul-sickness and malady: for when this grace is applied, *the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick*; the reason is, *the people that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their iniquity*^c; tho' storms and tempests may arise in the conscience of a sinner, thro' guilt fastened on it, yet

^a Pf. xxxii. 1. ^b Eph. i. 7. ^c Is. xxxiii. 24.

yet let but a word of pardon by Christ be spoken, all is hush and quiet; there is immediately a calm: and without this blessing, and a sense of it, a man cannot stand before God, and serve him in his sanctuary with pleasure; but let his conscience be sprinkled and purged by the blood of Christ, and that be applied to him for pardon; and then he will serve the living God freely and chearfully: and indeed, no one can look into eternity with comfort, and think of a future state with any satisfaction, unless he has a good hope thro' grace, of an interest in this blessing; but when he sees that God has in love to his soul, cast all his sins behind his back; and in his mercy to him, has thrown them into the depths of the sea; so that when they are sought for they shall not be found, being all freely and fully pardoned; then, though upon the brink of eternity, and just launching into another world, he can sing and say, *O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory? the sting of death is sin, and that is taken away by Christ; the strength of sin is the law, and that is fulfilled by him: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory over sin, law, hell and death, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ* ^w, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice.

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5. The

^w 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

5. The Lord also blesses his people with a justifying righteousness, and with fresh views of their interest in it, whilst they are serving him in places where he records his name, by the ministration of the gospel; for therein is this righteousness *revealed from faith to faith*^x; from one degree of it to another, until they arrive to a full assurance of its being theirs: and they are happy indeed, who receive this blessing from the Lord; even righteousness from the God of their salvation; they are truly blessed, thrice happy persons that are favoured with this grace, and indulged with a lively sense of it: *David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*^y; but it is not easy to give after him the whole description of that happiness: such have acceptance with God; God is well pleased with Christ, and with all his people in him, being clothed with his pure and perfect righteousness; with which righteousness he is well pleased; because by it the law is magnified and made honourable; his justice is satisfied; and all his perfections reconciled and honoured in the justification of his people by it; and not only are their persons accepted with God in the beloved, thro' the righteousness of Christ, and for the sake of it, but their services and duties; their sacrifices of prayer and praise also.

^x Rom. i. 17.^y Rom. iv. 6.

also. Moreover, such have great peace in themselves, much quietness and ease of mind; for, *the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever*²; not of the righteousness of man, which is impure and imperfect, and cannot justify before God; and, therefore, can never lay any solid foundation for peace; but of the righteousness of Christ, by which those that are justified, have peace with God, and in themselves; for, *the kingdom of God, in them, is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*³; that is, these are the fruits and effects of the righteousness of Christ, being received by faith, and so making a part of that kingdom of grace, in the heart of a believer, which can never be moved: to which may be added, that such who have an interest in this righteousness, are secured from condemnation and wrath; there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, and are justified by his righteousness; for, his blood-shed, sufferings, and death, which are a principal part of this righteousness, are their security from condemnation; so that they shall never enter into it, but shall pass from death to life; and they may assure themselves, that as they are justified by the blood of Christ, they shall be saved from wrath, through him: to say no more; they must needs be

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blessed

² Is. xxxii. 17.³ Rom. xiv. 17.

bleſſed and happy, ſince they are hereby entitled to eternal life. Hence, juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs is called, the *juſtification of life*ⁱ; for, being juſtified through it, they are *made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life*^k, and ſhall moſt aſſuredly enter into it; for, this righteouſneſs will answer for them in a time to come, and give them admiſſion into the kingdom of heaven; which a man's own righteouſneſs, be it what it will, will leave him ſhort of.

6. Such as ſerve the Lord, and worſhip him in a ſpiritual manner, where his name is recorded, are bleſſed by him with eternal life itſelf; for, *there the Lord commands the bleſſing, even life for evermore*^l; they are here bleſſed with an enlarged view of it; *life and immortality*, or an immortal life, being more clearly *brought to light by the goſpel*^m, and the miniſtration of it; that preſenting to faith, the beſt account that is given of the unſeen glories, and inviſible realities of another world; and here, under the goſpel miniſtry, ſaints are ſometimes indulged as with a ſight of the *King in his beauty*; ſo with a proſpect of the good *land that is very far off*ⁿ; their hope of poſſeſſing it, is more and more encouraged, and their faith of it increaſed; and are, indeed, made to re-
joice

ⁱ Rom. v. 18.^k Tit. iii. 7.^l Pf. cxxxiii. 3.^m 2 Tim. i. 10.ⁿ H. xxxiii. 17.

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joyce in the believing views, and hope of the
 glory of God, they have some glimpse of;
 yea, he that believes hath eternal life, in
 some sense, already; he has it in promise,
 and in faith and hope; and he has the earnest
 and pledge of it, yea, the beginning of it,
 which is grace in him, and the knowledge
 of God in Christ; for, *this is life eternal,*
that they might know thee, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent °; which
 spiritual and experimental knowledge, unto
 which life eternal is annexed, is increased
 yet more and more, by means of the word
 and ordinances, the memorials of the name
 of God in his house; these are appointed
 for that purpose, and continued to that end,
till we all come in, or into the unity of the faith,
and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto
a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature
of the fulness of Christ †; and this is no small
 encouragement to attend upon them: and
 when all this is considered, in how many
 instances, and by how many ways, God
 blesses his people, that meet and worship
 him, where he records his name; it will
 clearly appear what a regard he has to such
 places, and what inducements there are to
 his people to attend them.

This will be more evident, if it be ob-
 served, that these blessings are blessings in-
 deed;

• John xvii. 3.

† Eph. iv. 13.

deed; true and real ones; such as *Jabez* prayed for, when he said, *oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed*¹; or, in blessing, bless me: some blessings have only an appearance of blessings; are rather imaginary than real; at least they are not to be mentioned with these; as the outward blessings of life, temporal good things; for they sometimes are turned into curses, and are curses to wicked men; but these are covenant-blessings, the sure mercies of *David*, which come from a covenant-God, through Christ, the Mediator of the covenant, and in a way of covenant-grace, which makes them sure, to all the spiritual seed of Christ: these are spiritual blessings, are of a spiritual nature, in distinction from corporal ones, from blessings of the basket, and of the store; are suited to spiritual men, and make for the welfare of the spirit and soul of man; and are brought down, and brought near, revealed, and applied by the Holy Spirit of God, who takes them, and shews believers their interest in them: these are solid and substantial blessings; in comparison of which, temporal ones are things which are not, that have no solidity and substance in them, mere non-entities; but the blessings of grace, which saints are made to inherit now, are substance; and that glory they shall possess hereafter, is

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¹ 1 Chron. iv. 10.

a better and more enduring substance, than any thing enjoyed here. In a word; the blessings God blesses his people with, who are found true and spiritual worshippers of him, where he records his name, are unchangeable, irreversibile, and for ever; he never repents of them, nor revokes them; when God gives commandment to bless his people, and does bless them, they are blessed; and it is not in the power of men or devils, to reverse such a commandment, or such blessings; they come from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning; and they are like him, invariable and unalterable; what *Isaac* said to *Esau* concerning *Jacob*, is applicable to these blessings; *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed* *; and, it may be strongly argued from hence, that if a poor, frail, weak, and dying man, would not make any alteration in a blessing he had conferred on his son, though earnestly solicited to it; much less will that God, who is the immutable *Jehovah*, the everlasting *I Am*, make any change in, or reverse the blessings he has bestowed on his people: no, whatever he does in this way, is for ever; there is an inseparable connexion between the blessings of grace, and eternal glory; to whom he gives the one he gives the other; *whom*
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* Gen. xxvii. 33.

he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

To conclude; we see how strong are the reasons, how forcible the arguments, how great the encouragement, to engage us to attend the house and ordinances of God; for, if his presence and blessing are not sufficient, what will be? The Lord, to encourage the people of *Israel* to wait at the door of the tabernacle, of the congregation, promised to meet them there, and commune with them: and Christ, to encourage his ministers and churches to attend to his word and ordinances, promised his presence with them, to the end of the world; than which nothing greater could be suggested to them: and, since God is to be met with in public places of worship; his grace is there displayed and communicated; Christ is to be found, and with him life and righteousness, and salvation, and the love and favour of God to be obtained and enjoyed; this may induce us to a constant attendance in them; *blessed is the man*, says wisdom, or Christ, *that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.* But then it should be observed, that the places where attendance is to be given,

* Rom. viii. 30.

† Prov. viii. 34, 35.

given, in a religious way, are where the *name* of the Lord is *recorded*; there only his presence and blessing are to be expected; not where there is no mention of him; where the free grace of God, in the salvation of men, is not set forth; where the name of Christ is not spoken of, but studiously concealed, and but only occasionally, or now and then taken notice of under some low epithet or another; but, instead thereof, man's free will is exalted; the power and purity of human nature cried up; justification and salvation are attributed to the works of men, and only a moral scheme is advanced and enforced; in such places the presence and blessing of God are not to be met with; and, indeed, they are here rarely thought of, or sought for: but, if the name of God is recorded in a place, in the sense in which it has been explained, it matters not what the place is, or is called, as has been observed; since Jehovah *dwelleth not in temples made with hands* ^u, at least is not limited and restrained unto them; nor does he regard the form and manner in which they are built; he dwells in a more stately temple than any that can be erected on earth; the *heaven* is his *throne*, and the earth his *footstool*; and, therefore, he may well say, *where is the house that ye build unto me?* and

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where

^u Acts xvii. 24.

where is the place of my rest ? Since there is none built, or can be built equal to the glory of his Majesty ; therefore our great concern should be, to worship him in a spiritual manner, with our whole spirits, in the exercise of spiritual graces, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the spirit of God, and to give unto him the glory due unto his name, even to each divine person ; to the Father, who has chosen us to holiness and happiness ; to the Son, who has redeemed us by his precious blood ; and to the Spirit, who has regenerated and sanctified us, and is the earnest of our future glory.

¶ If. lvi. 1.

F I N I S.



